

MIDDLE EAST & SOUTH ASIA REVIEW

24 FEBRUARY 1987

Lebanon

Syrian Measures — Brigadier General Ghazi Kan'an announced 23 February that Syrian forces would shortly occupy all party offices in West Beirut, Beirut radio reported. Voice of Lebanon radio cited reports that the Syrians have closed down a number of Amal Movement and PSP offices and arrested 90 PSP members. Syrian troops killed 7 PSP and Communist Party gunmen in various clashes, the radio said.

On Syria's intentions toward the situation in southern Beirut, Voice of National Resistance radio reported a statement by Gen Kan'an denying that Syrian forces intend to enter the southern suburb. However, in remarks broadcast by Beirut radio, Prime Minister Rashid Karami stressed that the 9-point security plan "includes the southern suburb." As for the foreign hostages, Lebanese political sources said the Syrians will soon capture a base in West Beirut used by fundamentalists for detaining foreign hostages, according to the Voice of Lebanon.

PSP leader Walid Junblatt reaffirmed his support for the Syrian measures in remarks reported by the clandestine Voice of the Mountain radio, and he stressed the need to "rectify" relations between the nationalist parties and the Amal Movement. Junblatt said he opposes disarming the Palestinians, adding that an overall agreement to define and reorganize the Palestinian presence requires the establishment of a "nationalist, just, and secure regime" in Lebanon.

Further Israeli Comment — The Syrians should know that Israel is watching their moves in Lebanon and that it will take care of Israeli interests and security, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir stated in remarks broadcast by Jerusalem radio. A *Ma'ariv* commentary viewed the Syrian move as Soviet-inspired, asserting that the USSR was concerned over the possibility of U.S. intervention in Lebanon and therefore wanted the Syrians to restore order in order to eliminate pretexts for a U.S. move.

Other Reaction — A TASS analysis maintained that Syria's intervention was welcomed by all "patriotic" forces in Lebanon, adding that the Americans "beat their own records in hypocrisy" by opposing the Syrian move. Damascus radio likewise denounced the U.S. and Israeli attitude, but emphasized that when Syria decides something "it does not need anyone's approval." Jordan's *Sawt al-Sha'b* welcomed the intervention as "good news" that signals the long-awaited recovery. On the other hand, Cairo television claimed that the Lebanese are "infuriated" by the Syrian move, which heralds "a more effective round of Palestinian genocide" and is a step toward partitioning Lebanon between Syria and Israel.

Syria's Relations With Libya, Iran

President Hafiz al-Asad discussed "regional developments and bilateral relations" with Libyan Staff Major 'Abd al-Salam

Jallud 23 February, Damascus television reported. The Iranian foreign minister and the Revolution Guards Corps minister arrived in Syria the same evening, according to Damascus radio. IRNA said the Iranian delegation will discuss bilateral relations, the regional situation and issues of mutual interest during their talks with Syrian officials.

Israel

Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres has "no authority whatsoever" to reach any agreement with Egyptian President Husni Mubarak about an international conference, Prime Minister Shamir warned in remarks reported by Jerusalem television. Shamir's comments followed the disclosure that Peres will visit Cairo 25 February to discuss the peace process with Mubarak. Asked by the television whether the government may disband, Shamir said this "may definitely be the case." Reacting to Shamir's warnings, Peres told Jerusalem radio that he does not know why the opposition to his position has "suddenly become serious now," and he emphasized his view that an international conference would be an opening step toward direct negotiations with the Arabs. Likud ministers have demanded that Peres obtain cabinet authorization for his visit and that he delay his departure until after Shamir's return from the United States, the radio noted.

Iran-Iraq War

An Iranian statement reported by IRNA "categorically denied" that Iran fired a "single shell" at Basra and accused Iraq of continuing to shell Abadan and Khorramshahr. The statement followed an Iraqi military announcement on Voice of the Masses radio that "many civilians" were killed or wounded when Iran violated the principles for a halt to the "cities war" by shelling Basra 22 and 23 February. The Iraqi announcement also described the Iranian offensive in the Jasim River area as a "blatant and premeditated attack against our national soil." A communique broadcast by the radio said that Iraqi forces "confronted" the Iranian attack, inflicting "thousands" of casualties. The same communique noted that Iraqi warplanes destroyed three SAM missile batteries in the Khorramshahr and Karun River areas.

Two Iraqi warplanes were downed in the Karbala'-5 sector 23 February, IRNA reported, adding that Iranian soldiers are fortifying their positions. An Iraqi military spokesman denied Iranian claims that two Mirage jets were downed over the Gulf 24 February, INA noted.

Regarding other action against Iraq, the Central Headquarters of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps announced that guerrillas inside that country began the second phase of the Fath-4 operations 22 February, IRNA reported. Iraqi forces reportedly suffered at least 1,500 casualties in attacks on various military

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and economic installations in the area of Rawanduz and Diyanah, Irbil Province, including the headquarters and the communications center of Iraq's V Corps.

Pakistan-USSR

Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze told visiting Pakistani Foreign Minister Sahabzada Yaqub Khan that the resolution of the Afghan problem "requires reciprocity," TASS reported. Shevardnadze also affirmed that a political settlement based on the termination of "outside interference" would "expedite" the withdrawal of Soviet troops.

FBIS**DAILY REPORT
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[Due to closing of federal offices 23 February 1987, Daily Report No 035 was not published.]

KYODO: Najibullah May Be on 'Way Out'
OW241301 Tokyo KYODO in English 1256 GMT
 24 Feb 87

[Text] Islamabad, Feb. 24 KYODO — Western diplomatic sources reported Tuesday there are speculations in Kabul that the Afghan Communist Party leader Najib has been isolated and may be on the way out. Quoting comments from East European ambassadors in the Afghan capital the diplomats said that the Soviets might be contemplating removal of the Afghan leader as a part of their plan to promote national reconciliation and a political settlement of the 8-year-old Afghan war.

Pakistani and American Government officials have urged the Soviets to establish a government in Kabul which would satisfy the anti-Marxist Afghan Mujahidin (freedom-fighters).

Deputy Premier Urges Refugees To Return
OW231319 Tokyo KYODO in English 1253 GMT
 23 Feb 87

[Text] Kabul, Feb. 23 KYODO — Vice Prime Minister Seyyed Amanuddin Amin urged Afghan refugees and antigovernment guerrillas Monday to return home and help the war-torn country push its national reconstruction programs. These people are the "man power" needed for pushing the economy, Amin said in an interview with KYODO news service. An estimated five million people have fled Afghanistan since the civil war began in late 1979 as a result of the Soviet military invasion.

The Soviet-backed Kabul government is urging the refugees and guerrillas to return home in a national reconciliation policy. Refugees are expected to play a major role in irrigation, road construction and other projects, said Amin, who is in charge of economic affairs.

Referring to relations between his country and Japan, Amin said he is disappointed that Japanese investment in Afghanistan has stopped since the socialist revolution in 1978. Afghanistan has a huge trade deficit with Japan, he added.

Reportage on Events Marking USSR Army Anniversary

Najibullah Attends Embassy Reception
LD231833 Kabul Domestic Service in Pashto 1530 GMT
 23 Feb 87

[Text] A reception was given by the Soviet Embassy in Kabul this evening on the occasion of the Soviet Army and Navy's 69th anniversary.

Taking part in the reception were: Comrade Najib, general secretary of the PDPA Central Committee; Haji Mohammad Chamkani, acting president of the Revolutionary Council; Comrade Soltan 'Ali Keshkmand, member of PDPA Central Committee Politburo and chairman of the DRA Council of Ministers; members of the Politburo, the Secretariat, and the PDPA Central Committee deputies; members of the Revolutionary Council and the Council of Ministers; generals and high-ranking officers

of the armed forces; high-ranking party and state officials; and ambassadors and military attaches of the friendly countries in Kabul.

Defense Ministry Meeting
LD221331 Kabul Domestic Service in Dari 1600 GMT
 21 Feb 87

[Excerpt] The 69th anniversary of the founding of the Soviet Army and Navy was celebrated today by officials of the DRA Defense Ministry at the conference hall of that ministry.

During this meeting, Brigadier General Mohammad Rafi, member of the PDPA Central Committee Politburo and minister of defense, expressed congratulations on behalf of the DRA Army officials to the officials of the limited Soviet contingents in the DRA. He recalled with appreciation the internationalist and selfless assistance of the Soviet Army to the people of Afghanistan and the solidarity and friendship between both countries' armies.

An officer of the limited Soviet contingents in the DRA spoke about the establishment and activities of the Soviet Army and Navy and their outstanding service in freeing mankind from the grip of Hitlerite fascism and the readiness of the Soviet internationalist soldiers to safeguard peace and the freedom of the peoples.

According to a BAKHTAR correspondent the meeting was also attended by the leadership of the Defense Ministry, by generals and commanders of the units and companies of Kabul city's garrison, by a number of General Staff officers, by Pavel Petrovich Mozhayev, USSR ambassador in the DRA, and by a number of officers and soldiers of the limited Soviet contingents in the DRA.

Rafi Commends Soviet Soldiers
LD230306 Kabul Domestic Service in Pashto 1600 GMT
 22 Feb 87

[Text] Comrade Brigadier General Mohammad Rafi, member of the PDPA Central Committee Politburo and DRA minister of defense, distributed commendation letters and gifts provided by the Ministry of Defense in honor of Afghan-Soviet Friendship Week, to a number of staff members of the limited contingents of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan.

The minister of defense spoke at the meeting about the formation of the Soviet Army and Navy and the combat fraternity of the personnel of both countries and their sacrifices. Then two officers of the Soviet limited contingents in Afghanistan briefly spoke. At the end of the meeting, some commendation letters and gifts were distributed to a number of officers and men of the limited contingents of the Soviet Union.

According to another report, Soviet Army and Navy Day was today marked at the DYOA Central Club. Comrade Farid Ahmad Mazdak, candidate member of PDPA Central Committee Politburo and first secretary of the DYOA Central Commit-

tee, spoke about the formation of the Soviet Army and Navy and its internationalist duties. He recalled the selfless assistance of the Soviet people to the people of Afghanistan. A number of officers of the Soviet units in Afghanistan and some staff members of the DRA Army spoke about the 69th anniversary of the formation of the Soviet Army and Navy and friendship between Afghanistan and the Soviet Union. In conclusion, a number of honorary medals of the DYOAC Central Committee were distributed to a number of personnel of the limited contingents of the Soviet Union by Comrade Farid Mazdak.

BAKHTAR Commentary Views Upcoming Geneva Talks
LD240615 Kabul BAKHTAR in English 0503 GMT 24 Feb 87

[Text] Kabul, February 23, BAKHTAR — The third stage of the 7th round of Geneva talks between the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, DRA, and Pakistan through mediation of representative of the United Nations Organisation, Diego Cordovez, will begin on February 25. The talks aims at evolving a political solution of the situation around Afghanistan, writes daily *Haqiqat-e Enqalab-e Sawr* editorially.

The threshold of this stage of the talks, the party and state of the DRA have declared their full readiness for making very necessary efforts and initiatives leading to meet the interests of the people of free, independent and non-aligned Afghanistan.

This readiness, the editorial indicates, brings about a good possibility for the normalization of the situation around Afghanistan. The leadership of the DRA declared an unilateral six-month cease-fire for the urgent normalization of the situation around Afghanistan and have endeavoured to realise the policy of national reconciliation which guarantees the interests of all political forces of Pakistan.

Right now, the editorial continues to say, the people's power has been continuing its dialogue with the opposition groups [words indistinct] which over 100 opposition groups comprising 15,000

armed people have approached peaceful accords. Thousands of refugees have returned home. Over 4,000 political prisoners have been released from prisons. The ground has been paved for the participation of the representatives of the opposition groups to the local organs and state administration and in the work of the commissions of national reconciliation. Above all, the editorial stresses, the DRA is ready to create a national unity government with a coalition characteristic.

The principled position of the DRA as regards the solution of the situation around the country [words indistinct] the support of our international friends at the first place by the Soviet Union, the editorial points out.

The leaders of the Soviet Union have repeatedly given their support to the political solution of the situation around Afghanistan and have been helping Afghans for the realisation of the policy of national reconciliation by taking concrete actions.

The constructive position of the DRA and the Soviet Union in connection with a political solution lies in that the cessation of intervention from abroad and guarantee for its non-resumption will provide favourable prerequisites for the ever-speedier return of the limited military contingents of the Soviet Union to their country. Both countries have demonstrated in action their genuine political will in this regard by returning six regiments of the limited military contingents of the Soviet Union to their peaceful country, the editorial concludes.

Karachi Cites Fierce Fighting in Herat Province
BK240619 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu 0600 GMT 24 Feb 87

[Text] Fierce fighting has been reported between Soviet-Kabul troops and Afghan mujahidin in Herat Province of Afghanistan. Severe clashes took place in Islam Qala and Chahar Deh where Soviet-Kabul troops suffered heavy casualties.

President Claims Opposition Strike 'Unheeded'
BK171704 Dhaka Domestic Service in English 1530
GMT 17 Feb 87

[Text] President Ershad has said only the elections, and no other means, can be considered as a yardstick of people's support. He was addressing public meetings at Bakshiganj, Milandaha, and Madargang upazila [subdistrict] headquarters under Jamalpur District today. The president said negative approaches, like hartals [strikes], are limited only to some pockets of urban areas, and even there the hartals are more or less imposed on the majority under threat.

The president wanted to know from the crowds whether there was any hartal in these upazilas yesterday. They replied in the negative. Taking the cue from this reply, the president said like these upazilas, the hartal called by a section of opposition parties yesterday went unheeded all over the country except in some pockets of urban areas. There was no hartal in 460 upazilas, where over 9 crore people live. He said those political parties who pose them as the champion of national independence act to befool the people with lusty words.

The meetings were addressed among others by minister without portfolio and Jatiya Party secretary general, Retired Major General Mahmudul Hassan, and state minister for civil aviation and tourism M.A. Sattar.

AFP: Opposition Walks Out of Parliament 20 Feb
BK201049 Hong Kong AFP in English 1013 GMT 20 Feb 87

[Text] Dhaka, Feb 20 (AFP) — Opposition members walked out of the Bangladesh Parliament to protest a speaker's ruling barring them from criticising President Hussain Mohammad Ershad, press reports said here Friday. The opposition members walked out late Thursday after house speaker Shamsul Huda Choudhury ruled that the constitution barred parliamentarians in session from "casting any aspersion" on the president or elections procedures.

Ninety-six of the 330 members of parliament joined in a walkout staged by the Awami league-led alliance of Sheikh Hasina Wajed, the press reports said.

The speaker's ruling followed opposition criticism of Mr. Ershad and his ruling Jatiya Party, particularly allegations of massive vote frauds and rigging in parliamentary elections in May. The

opposition members voiced their criticism in debate on Mr. Ershad's January 24 opening address.

The speaker said in his ruling that the Bangladesh Constitution revived in November after the lifting of martial law clearly barred parliamentarians in session from making any derogatory comments against the president or elections held legally under the election commission. Article 75 of the Constitution clearly prohibited making any offensive expression against the president and his election or against the parliament and its election, the speaker added.

'Immediate' Repatriation of Chakma Refugees Urged
BK190148 Dhaka Domestic Service in English 0110 GMT
19 Feb 87

[Text] Bangladesh has reiterated the call to start the immediate repatriation of the Chakma refugees from India and said it is ready to accept the genuine Bangladeshis from the Indian territory. The Home Ministry spokesman said in Dhaka that India had already been informed about Bangladesh's intention to take back 24,369 Chakmas of the Chittagong Hill Tracts identified as having crossed the border. He said the number of Chakma refugees put by Indian media as 48,000 is totally baseless. The spokesman said Bangladesh is always ready to accept the genuine Chakma refugees.

He said on the 15th of last month a date was fixed for the repatriation of the refugees after the meetings between the deputy commissioner of (Phagra Chori) and the district magistrate of South Tripura. All arrangements were made by the Bangladesh authorities for repatriation from the 15th of January through one point, but no refugees were sent from that end. The spokesman said the repatriation process should have begun from the Indian side to meet this situation. He said despite the repeated requests from Bangladesh there was no progress on the part of India to start the repatriation process.

Recently, the spokesman said, the deputy commissioner of (Phagra Chori) gave the reminder to his Indian counterpart with a request to inform him of their program at least 4 days ahead of the proposed visit by the tribal (?team). Bangladesh is still awaiting for the reply from the Indian side. It may be mentioned that Bangladesh has agreed to the Indian proposal that a team of the Chakmas will visit the villages in Bangladesh as suggested by India. A date was also given for their visit before the repatriation starts. But there was no response from the Indian side.

Reportage on Visit of Pakistan's Ziaul Haq**Arrives, Met by Gandhi**

*BK211243 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1230 GMT
21 Feb 87*

[Text] The Pakistan president, General Ziaul Haq, arrived in New Delhi this evening and was received by the prime minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, at the airport. General Zia will call on the president, Giani Zail Singh, at Rashtrapati Bhavan [president's house] and later he will be Mr Gandhi's guest at a dinner.

He leaves for Jaipur tomorrow morning to watch the second day's play in the third cricket test between India and Pakistan. In the afternoon he will visit the dargah [shrine] of Hazrat Nizamuddin Chisti at Ajmer.

Meets With Zail Singh, Gandhi

*BK211555 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT
21 Feb 87*

[Excerpt] The prime minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, and the visiting Pakistan president, General Ziaul Haq, met this evening in New Delhi over dinner. The dinner was hosted by Mr Gandhi for General Zia who arrived in the capital this evening on a short visit. The Pakistan president and Begum Zia were received by Mr Rajiv Gandhi, Mrs Sonia Gandhi, and a number of ministers. The general and the prime minister drove together to Rashtrapati Bhavan [president's house] where the Pakistan president is staying. Soon after arrival, General Ziaul Haq and his delegation called on the president, Giani Zail Singh. The meeting lasted half an hour.

The Pakistan president's party includes his family members, the minister for interior, the governor and chief minister of Punjab, several Pakistani cricketers and officials. [passage omitted]

Sees 'Normalization' of Ties

*BK220500 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0435 GMT
22 Feb 87*

[Text] India and Pakistan are to carry forward the process of normalization of their relations. The issue of increased trade and other pending matters concerning bilateral relations are to be pushed through so that an early settlement is arrived at. The prime minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, and the visiting Pakistan president, General Ziaul Haq, agreed on this during their informal talks over dinner in New Delhi last night.

According to official sources, the two leaders expressed their desire to expedite the work of the Joint Indo-Pak Commission. It has not met for quite some time because two of its subcommissions could not meet. One of the subcommissions is on bilateral trade. India is keen to have more trade and it is of the view that Indian goods should be allowed to compete with other foreign goods in the Pakistan market.

The Pakistan president and Begum Zia were seen off this morning at the Delhi Airport by the prime minister and Mrs Sonia

Gandhi on their departure for Jaipur. He has gone to there to watch the India-Pakistan cricket match being played there.

Calls Talks 'Very Useful'

*BK220320 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu 0200 GMT
22 Feb 87*

[Text] President Mohammad Ziaul Haq has said he had very useful talks with Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. He said like the Pakistan people's desire for good relations with India, the Indian prime minister also sincerely desires to establish good relations with Pakistan. Talking to Pakistani press correspondents in New Delhi, the president said the Indian prime minister briefed him about the Indian military exercises "Brass Tacks" which had created misunderstandings, doubts, and suspicions. It is a good omen that instead of going into causes of suspicions generated by the "Brass Tacks" exercises, the crisis has been resolved. I am confident that the process for normalization of relations through such negotiations will continue and that they will bring about positive results, the president added.

President Ziaul Haq said he again reminded the Indian prime minister of the invitation to visit Pakistan where he will be accorded an enthusiastic welcome whenever he pays a visit to the country. President Zail Singh has also been invited to visit Pakistan.

Answering a question about the no-war pact, the president said the 4th February agreement is tantamount to that pact, because in the fourth clause of the agreement the two sides have agreed not to attack each other. He expressed the hope that the fourth clause of the agreement will become permanent.

Replying to a question about the two sides not attacking each other's nuclear installations, the president said there is no ambiguity about this and that putting it into writing will be a mere formality.

The Radio Pakistan correspondent says that the president is optimistic about the future of India-Pakistan relations, and he is happy that the tension has been de-escalated and he has been able to visit India to see the cricket match.

The president visited the shrine of Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia [Muslim Sufi saint] in New Delhi and offered prayers there. He also announced a donation of 1 lakh rupees for the shrine. He will also pay a visit to the shrine of Hazrat Moinuddin Chishti in Ajmer Sharif this afternoon. The president will return to Islamabad tomorrow.

Arrives in Jaipur

*BK220632 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu 0600 GMT
22 Feb 87*

[Text] President Mohammad Ziaul Haq has said Pakistan condemns all forms of aggression and has always been against war and every kind of terrorism. He was answering a foreign correspondent's question on arrival at Jaipur Airport from New Delhi this morning. In reply to another question whether his visit

will help in ending tension between the two countries, the president said that in his opinion, talks and contacts are very important for easing tension. The contact being maintained at this time between the two countries will in itself contribute toward improving bilateral relations.

In reply to yet another question, President Ziaul Haq said he is a great fan of cricket and believes in cricket for peace. Answering yet another question, the president said his meetings with President Giani Zail Singh and Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi have been very cordial.

At the Jaipur Airport, the president was received by Rajasthan Governor Vasantdada Patil and Chief Minister Harideo Joshi. The president then drove to Rambagh Palace where he will stay. The people lining the two sides of the street welcomed the president by clapping, while Ziaul Haq responded by waving toward them.

The president later saw the third cricket test [between India and Pakistan] in Jaipur. Earlier on his departure from New Delhi this morning, he was seen off by Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

Hails Soviet Initiatives on DRA

BK230255 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu 0200 GMT
23 Feb 87

[Text] President Mohammad Ziaul Haq has expressed the hope that the Soviet Union will boldly translate into action the new proposals it has put forward for a political settlement of the Afghanistan problem.

In an informal chat with newsmen in Jaipur yesterday, he said the steps recently taken by Soviet leader Gorbachev are encouraging, as they include certain basic elements for the solution of the Afghanistan problem. Pakistan fully supports these efforts which hold the key to the settlement of the Afghan tangle.

Answering a question, the president said Pakistan is opposed to the proliferation of nuclear arms, but its stand on the nuclear nonproliferation treaty is based on principles.

About the India-Pakistan agreement for not attacking each other's nuclear installations, the president said that although there is no formal written agreement, an effective mutual understanding exists in this regard.

Answering questions about India-Pakistan relations, Ziaul Haq said that he was optimistic. He expressed the hope that a day will come when the two countries will be able to establish friendly and good-neighborly relations. He said that Indian President Zail Singh and Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi both expressed similar sentiments during his meetings with them and that his talks with Indian leaders were very cordial and positive.

The Indian prime minister will be accorded a very enthusiastic welcome when he pays a visit to Pakistan at his convenience. He expressed the hope that Rajiv Gandhi's visit will promote political and other aspects of India-Pakistan relations. The president

was a chief guest at the Rajasthan Cricket Association's dinner in Jaipur last night.

Concludes 'Successful' Visit

BK230741 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0730 GMT
23 Feb 87

[Text] The Pakistan president, General Ziaul Haq, left Jaipur for Islamabad this morning after a 3-day visit to India. Talking to newsmen at Jaipur airport before his departure, Gen Zia described his visit as successful and hoped the two countries would renew their efforts to reduce tension on the India-Pakistan border and improve bilateral relations. He said he is optimistic over the prospects for peace between the two countries.

The Pakistan president and Begum Zia were seen off at the airport by the Rajasthan governor, Mr Vasant Rao Patil; the chief minister, Mr Harideo Joshi, and the union minister of state for textiles, Mr Ram Niwas Mirdha.

Gandhi Addresses Congress-I Meeting

BK221607 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT
22 Feb 87

[Text] Mr Rajiv Gandhi has said that during his discussions with President Ziaul Haq of Pakistan last night certain issues were discussed pertaining to problems like containing infiltration of terrorists, drug trafficking, and smuggling across the border.

Addressing the Congress-I parliamentary party meeting in New Delhi today, Mr Gandhi expressed the hope that the border between the two countries will be sealed to deal with these problems. He said the home secretaries of the two countries have had detailed discussions and reached a broad agreement on these issues.

Giving a brief account of the Pakistani troop deployment across the border, Mr Gandhi said the discussions were held with the Pakistan leaders and misunderstandings were cleared. He also said that the Indian armed forces are fully prepared to meet any eventuality.

Referring to the Punjab problem, the Congress-I president said that this can be solved through peaceful means and with patience. He congratulated the Barnala government in its efforts to deal with the problem. Referring to the demand of most opposition parties for sending army to Punjab, he said it will not solve the problem. The meeting held at Longowal village on Friday has shown the courage and strength of the Barnala government and the people's faith in it.

Mr Rajiv Gandhi said that there should be a nationwide debate on ways and means of containing terrorism, and if after debate it is found necessary to amend the constitution, the government will come forward with necessary steps.

About communalism, Mr Gandhi said that it is again raised its head and we have to fight the menace.

Referring to the situation in Sri Lanka, he said that unless the Sri Lanka Government stops military operation, a political solution cannot be found.

On the economic front, Mr Gandhi said that the economy is in a good shape. The government has taken certain steps to accelerate the development process. At the same time basic policies have not been changed. Only a new thrust, a new dimension, and a new look have been given. This has resulted in maintaining the growth rate at 5 percent for 2 successive years and industrial growth also registered an increase ranging from 7 to 9 percent. Mr Gandhi said that in spite of unprecedented drought and floods in certain parts of the country, agriculture production has been stepped up. Commending the public sector for its good performance, Mr Gandhi said that there is no question of privatization of public sector.

Sikh Convention Annuls Barnala's Excommunication

*BK201303 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1230 GMT
20 Feb 87*

[Text] The Longowal Sikh convention has annulled the excommunication of Mr Surjit Singh Barnala and expressed full faith in his leadership. The historic convention at the native village of the late Sant Harchand Singh Longowal was attended by several thousands of people from all over the country. They included senior party leaders, jathedars [Sikh religious leaders], granthis [custodians of Sikh scripture], and representatives of Singh Sabhas [Sikh religious bodies] and other Sikh organizations. Several ministers and legislators, including some who had figured in the list released by the acting chief of the Akal Takht [highest religious seat of the Sikhs], Professor Darshan Singh, claiming their allegiance, also attended the convention. These included the [state] finance minister, Mr Balwant Singh, and the rural development minister, Mr Baldev Singh Kiala and the deputy speaker, Mr Jaswant Singh.

The All India Radio correspondent, P.J. Trehan, reports from Longowal village that a resolution expressing full faith in the leadership of Mr Barnala was adopted by the participants by raising hands. It also appreciated the efforts being made by him as chief minister for peace, amity and welfare of the people of Punjab.

The resolution strongly condemned the activities of the extremist and secessionist forces and elements working against the interest of Punjab and the nation. It pledged to fight against these forces unitedly. It appealed to the people and all political parties to fight these forces boldly and unitedly.

The resolution said some divisive forces have been working to bring down the Akali government. It regretted that these forces have started taking assistance from the Akal Takht behind the garb of Panthic [community] unity.

Further Details on Resolution

*BK201623 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT
20 Feb 87*

[Excerpts] The Longowal Sikh convention has annulled the excommunication of Mr Surjit Singh Barnala from the Sikh Panth (community) and expressed full faith in his leadership. [passage omitted] The resolution reaffirmed that the Shiromani Akali Dal [Longowal group] believes in the supremacy of the Akal Takht [highest religious seat of the Sikhs] and is following the traditions established since the time of Guru Nank Dev [founder of the Sikh religion].

The convention assured Sikhs all over the world that any effort made by religious leaders for unity through democratic methods based on Sikh traditions will be acceptable. It urged the center, particularly the prime minister, to implement the Punjab accord in letter and spirit.

The convention expressed concern over the conditions in Punjab and elsewhere in the country created by inimical forces and antinational elements. It said Sant Longowal had laid down his life for the unity and integrity of the country and peace in Punjab. The Shiromani Akali Dal is determined to achieve these goals.

The convention was attended by 39 out of 46 ruling Shiromani Akali Dal legislators. These included 12 out of the 19 Akali legislators mentioned in the list released by the Akal Takht chief. Mr Barnala and the senior vice president of the Akali Dal, Mr Amar Singh Nalini, were among those who addressed the convention.

The finance minister, Mr Balwant Singh, in his address alleged that the acting chief of the Akal Takht had acted in haste perhaps under the influence of some external or internal forces. He said while we accept the supremacy of the Akal Takht, we cannot accept the unified Akali Dal and its constitution.

According to UNI [United News of India] the acting Akal Takht chief, Professor Darshan Singh, has said he is prepared to help in initiating talks between the central government and various Sikh bodies, including militant organizations. Talking to newsmen in Amritsar today, he said it is in the interest of all concerned that confrontation and violence should end.

President's Departure Statement on India Visit
BK211352 Karachi Domestic Service in English 1300 GMT
 21 Feb 87

[Text] President Mohammad Ziaul Haq arrived in New Delhi from Islamabad this evening. He was received at the airport by the Indian prime minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi.

Earlier, in a brief chat with newsmen before his departure at Islamabad airport, the president said his visit to India would help in the promotion of sports, encourage [word indistinct], and improve bilateral relations between Pakistan and India. He said during his stay in the Indian capital he would meet President Zail Singh and hold informal meeting with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. He said it had been Pakistan's efforts for the last 10 years that as independent and sovereign state Pakistan and India should live together as good neighbors. He was confident that the visit will help in improvement of relations between the two countries. When asked to comment on the withdrawal of troops from the borders, the president said 4 February agreement has been successfully implemented by the two countries and the troops have returned to their cantonments from the Ravi-Chenab corridor.

The president will have dinner with the Indian prime minister tonight. Tomorrow morning he will leave for Jaipur where he will watch the 2d day's play of cricket test between Pakistan and India. Later he will go to Ajmer Sherief [Muslim shrine in Rajasthan] and return to Jaipur in the evening. The Rajasthan cricket association will give a banquet in his honor tomorrow. The president will return to Islamabad on Monday.

Returns, Holds News Conference
BK231145 Karachi Domestic Service in English
 1100 GMT 23 Feb 87

[Text] President Mohammad Ziaul Haq has said he had told the Indian prime minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, that Pakistan as a Muslim country is against interference in the internal affairs of other countries. He was addressing a news conference on his return from India at the Islamabad airport today.

The president said he had offered to the Indian prime minister that the two countries could arrive at a package type of statement [as heard] that what is happening in India is India's internal affair and what is happening in Pakistan is Pakistan's internal affair. Both the countries should cooperate with each other in the antiterrorist, antismuggling, and antinarcotics measures. If agreed to, it would be a welcome step to normalize relations between them. The president said his talk with the Indian prime minister was brief and could be described as successful.

Further Details
BK231630 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu 1500 GMT
 23 Feb 87

[Excerpts] President Mohammad Ziaul Haq has said the governments and people of Pakistan and India desire to establish extremely cordial relations in order to solve problems to the

mutual benefit. He said this while addressing a news conference at the Islamabad airport on his return from India today. He said it is not just his impression, but the members of this delegation also have the same view. He said during his informal talks with the Indian Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, he felt that there are adequate possibilities for normalizing relations between the two countries. As a result of his brief visit, contacts between the prime ministers of Pakistan and India, and the troops pull-out from one sector, the possibility of war between the two countries has been reduced considerably. Neither of the two countries wants war. They want to utilize their resources for the welfare of their people.

The president said the Indian prime minister was of the view that some misunderstanding was created by the "Brass Tacks" exercise, but at the conclusion of these exercises the defense attaches, including the defense attache of Pakistan, should visit the exercise area to witness for themselves the objective of the exercises. He described the Indian prime minister's proposal as a welcome move and expressed the hope that the misunderstanding created on both sides will be removed. The president said although he had a brief discussion with the Indian prime minister, it can be described as successful. [passage omitted]

In reply to a question, the president said there was no discussion on Kashmir. Pakistan is firm on its stand; it wants a peaceful settlement of this issue in accordance with Simla agreement.

The president thanked the government, the president, the prime minister and the people of India for the enthusiastic welcome accorded to him and his delegation in Delhi, Jaipur, and Ajmer Sherif [shrine of a Muslim saint in Rajasthan]. [passage omitted]

Earlier, speaking to newsmen in Jaipur this morning the president expressed the hope that both countries will solve their differences peacefully and establish ideal relations. He said the leaders and the people of the two countries desire good relations. In his message to Indian president Zail Singh from his aircraft while en route home, the president reaffirmed Pakistan's resolve to continue the task of establishing good neighborly relations and relations based on mutual cooperation between the two countries. In his message to Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, the president said, as a result of his discussions in a friendly and cordial atmosphere, Pakistan's resolve to establish good neighborly relations with India has become stronger which will benefit the people of the two countries and promote peace in the region.

Commentary on Goal of Visit
BK201735 Karachi Domestic Service in English 1600 GMT
 20 Feb 87

[Ghani Erabi commentary]

[Text] President Ziaul Haq's visit to India tomorrow coinciding with the completion of troop withdrawal from the explosive Ravi-Chenab corridor is intended to signal Pakistan's resolve to build a rationally cordial relationship with India. Even though no documents will be signed, the visit by itself should help reassure New Delhi that Pakistan means well, harbors no ill will,

and seeks a peaceful solution to whatever outstanding problems there be between the two countries. Other than to carry home the message, there can be no other purpose to the trip. Heads of states don't go visiting other countries to watch cricket matches, less so in this age of global television hook-ups. If the Zia-Rajiv talks in New Delhi on Saturday night can help defuse the point of tension, clear some misgivings, and mend a few fences, more than the cricket series will have been won by both sides. However, looked at the wrong way the trip can undermine the goodwill sought to be generated. If the people in Pakistan overburden the visit with expectation, it is bound to end up in a feeling of let down and if the Indian media viewed it as an Indo-Pakistan contest in diplomatic one-upmanship the visit is likely to evoke a handle with care response.

Once the forthcoming visit is accepted in good faith, tangible benefits can flow out of it. Even though the overall atmosphere today is not as favorable as in December 1985 when the Zia-Rajiv parleys in New Delhi promised a new page in Indo-Pakistan relations, they can still achieve a lot. They can, for instance, overrule the technical hitches interposed by bureaucracy and finalize their accord not to attack each other's nuclear installations. What makes the agreement so [words indistinct] is the fact that both sides stand to gain from it. They can also provide for more vigorous follow up to the undersanding then achieved on travel, trade, and cooperation in agriculture.

It is also to be hoped that President Ziaul Haq will succeed in assuaging Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's misgivings about alleged Pakistani support to Sikh extremism, and Mr Gandhi will be made aware of how Pakistan feels about Indian support to the dissidents in Sind. This today is the most sensitive issue on both sides in the mutual clearing of suspicion on this (?scale) might enable Islamabad and New Delhi to make the new beginning in Indo-Pakistan relationship.

Diffusion of the no-war declaration proposed by Pakistan and the friendship treaty sponsored by India apparently have run into snags which may take long time to sort out. But a follow-up which involves a common document need not be viewed as end of the line. The merger of the two was to be no more than a means to an end — the end being actual tension-free relations on the ground. And such a goal can be reached by other routes such as the foreign secretaries meeting that has brought about the current de-escalation of border tension, such as the forthcoming Zia-Rajiv summit that can set up a permanent mechanism for

automatic defusion of tension and foster an understanding that will eliminate the basic cause for recurring confrontation.

Foreign Minister Leaves for Moscow 22 Feb
BK220814 Karachi Overseas Service in English
 0800 GMT 22 Feb 87

[Text] The foreign minister, Sahabzada Yaqub Khan, left Islamabad this morning for Moscow on his way to Geneva where the indirect talks on the Afghanistan issue will begin on Wednesday.

Talking to newsmen before his departure, he said during his 2-day stay in Moscow he and the Soviet foreign minister will be exploring the avenues for facilitating a settlement on the Afghanistan issue. These talks would be a continuation of discussions he had with Mr Shevardnadze recently. He said the specifics of the (?steps) that are likely to be discussed at Geneva, primarily the question of the timeframe of the withdrawal of the Soviet troops, will be taken up. These talks, he added, will have an influence on the negotiations at Geneva which are entering a crucial and delicate stage.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Arrives 20 Feb
BK210228 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu 0200 GMT
 21 Feb 87

[Text] Dr Javad Larijani, the Iranian deputy foreign minister, arrived in Islamabad on an official visit yesterday. He is expected to meet Foreign Minister Sahabzada Yaqub Khan and will hold talks with senior officials of the Foreign Office. His current visit is in continuation of regular exchanges of visit between the two countries for consultation on bilateral matters and issues of mutual interest.

Meets With Foreign Minister
BK211530 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu 1500 GMT
 21 Feb 87

[Text] The Iranian deputy foreign minister, Dr Javad Larijani, had an exchange of views with the foreign minister, Sahabzada Yaqub Khan, in Islamabad today. It is understood that they discussed promotion of the existing good relations between the two countries and the Afghanistan problem.

Velayati, Rafiqdust Leave for Damascus 23 Feb
LD231758 Tehran IRNA in English 1751 GMT 23 Feb 87

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 23, IRNA — Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati and Minister of the Islamic Revolution's Guards Corps (IRGC) Mohsen Rafiqdust left for Damascus Monday.

Velayati told IRNA before his departure that he will hold talks with Syrian officials on issues concerning the Middle-East and the region, including the Iraqi-imposed war.

The foreign minister referring to the joint stance of Iran and Syria in the political arena especially regional issues and those of occupied Palestine, described Tehran-Damascus relations as "excellent".

Friendly relations between Iran and Syria and the need for coordination in their attitude towards the issues necessitates that the two countries' officials exchange views every now and then, he said.

Velayati emphasised that Tehran-Damascus ties are the key and determining factors in the region, adding that no important development occurs in this region, without affecting Iran and Syria.

The Iranian ministers of foreign affairs and IRGC are accompanied by a delegation from the two ministries in their one-day visit.

Syrian Embassy officials in Tehran as well as a group of Iranian Foreign Ministry officials saw off Velayati, Rafiqdust and the accompanying delegation.

Welcomed in Damascus

LD240828 Tehran IRNA in English 0822 GMT 24 Feb 87

[Text] Damascus, Feb. 24, IRNA — Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati and Minister of Islamic Revolution's Guards Corps Mohsen Rafiqdust arrived here Monday night and were welcomed by Syrian Minister of Foreign Affairs Faruq al-Shar' and Iranian Embassy staff. The Iranian delegation will discuss with Syrian officials bilateral relations, the regional situation and issues of mutual interest.

Meanwhile, officials of eight Palestinian resistance groups in Damascus lauded the Iranian and Libyan endeavors to end clashes in Lebanon. According to the report the officials of Palestinian National Salvation Front accompanied by representatives of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine as well as Revolutionary Council of Fatah met Monday night with member of Libyan Revolutionary Command Council 'Abd al-Salam Jallud.

Sheikh ol-Eslam Returns After 3 Months in Beirut
LD210951 Tehran IRNA in English 0917 GMT 21 Feb 87

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 21, IRNA — Deputy for political affairs of the Iranian Foreign Ministry, Hoseyn Sheikh ol-Eslam, returned to Tehran Friday night after a three-month long stay in Lebanon

to help implement the multi-phase proposal of the Islamic Republic of Iran to end the camps war in that country.

Speaking to reporters after arrival he said that the Iranian cease-fire plan was drafted on the request of various factions in Lebanon and took into consideration the interests of all groups involved. The severity of the clashes and diversity of opinions, was the reason given by Sheikh ol-Eslam for the long time it took to hammer out the comprehensive agreement.

The Iranian mission and proposal, he added, called for lengthy negotiations with leaders and representatives of rival groups. Fortunately, Sheikh ol-Eslam added, as a result of the continuous efforts of the Iranian delegation, outstanding achievements were made in reducing the intensity and scale of the clashes. Another breakthrough was the end of the siege of the Palestinian camps.

Most of the credit for these gains, he said, goes to special representative of Imam Khomeyni to the Red Crescent society, Hojjat ol-Eslam Ghayuri, head of the society Dr. Vahid Dastjerdi and staff of Iranian Embassies in Beirut and Damascus.

Contrary to attempts of certain elements in Lebanon, as long as the Lebanese people assist in the implementation of the Iranian proposal and as long as they think that efforts of Iran are useful, the Islamic Republic of Iran will pursue its efforts.

Sheikh ol-Eslam furthermore praised cooperation of the Lebanese ulema and Palestinians with Iran in executing the proposed plan. He added that he will submit a report on progress of the Iranian plan and situation of camps to the officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Khamene'i Meets Air Force Officials 21 Feb
NC220634 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0330 GMT 22 Feb 87

[Text] A meeting of the Supreme Council of Staff and Air Force base commanders of the Islamic Republic of Iran was held last night, chaired by President Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i, who is also chairman of the Supreme Defense Council. Air Force Commander Colonel Sattari submitted a report on the current situation and the activities of the Air Force to the chairman of the Supreme Defense Council during the meeting.

President Khamene'i then spoke, noting the crucial and important role the Islamic Republic's Air Force has played since the onset of Iraq's imposed war on Iran, praised Air Force personnel, and lauded the lofty memory of its dear martyrs. He also explained the superpowers' fear of the Islamic Republic's popular system and said that the imposition of the war was one of the plots hatched by world arrogance. He said: If we had fallen short before our dastardly enemy — Iraq — our revolution's fate would have been different. Thank God our combatant forces were able — by depending on God and through courage and devotion — to show their strength to the enemy Ba'thist forces, bringing the conflict to such a point that Iraq's mentors can harbor no hope for supporting its shaky regime.

The president also spoke of the importance of the Air Force's campaign for self-sufficiency and the role of education in this force. He expressed appreciation for actions already taken in this regard and advised all officials and commanders to pay more attention to this issue.

In conclusion, Khamene'i wished all officials of this force success in carrying out their important task and setting an example for future generations.

Khomeyni Pardons 1,300 Inmates To Mark Revolution
LD221121 Tehran IRNA in English 1059 GMT 22 Feb 87

[Text:] Mashhad, Khorasan Prov., Feb. 22, IRNA — On the occasion of the victory of the Islamic Revolution 1,300 prisoners here were pardoned by the leader of the Islamic Revolution, Imam Khomeyni.

Khorasan public prosecutor told IRNA that 888 of the inmates had sentences less than 12 months and the remaining had over a year. He said the sentences of 185 of the prisoners were commuted.

Joint Talks With Saudi Arabia on Oil Continue
LD221214 Tehran IRNA in English 1205 GMT 22 Feb 87

[Text:] Tehran, Feb. 22, IRNA — Oil Minister Gholam Reza Aqazadeh said here Sunday that Iran and Saudi Arabia will continue their talks as well as their supervision and control over oil market. He said the two countries will also increase their efforts to get OPEC member countries to further cooperation among themselves.

The oil minister said that the ongoing meeting in Doha, the capital city of Qatar, is being held in this regard and that outcome of the meeting, which he said would serve to stabilize the price of oil and to guarantee the implementation of fixed prices would be fully supported by the Islamic Republic of Iran.

On the possibility of holding an extraordinary meeting of OPEC member-states, Aqazadeh said that he is confident that the current trend in oil market and of upward prices is pretty much here to stay. He reiterated that the organisation's members would hold an extraordinary session, if necessary, to defend the oil prices by reducing their production ceiling.

Iraqi Claim of Basra Bombing Refuted
LD231600 Tehran IRNA in English 1535 GMT 23 Feb 87

[Text:] Tehran, Feb. 23, IRNA — The Islamic Republic of Iran Monday categorically denied an Iraqi claim that Basra had been shelled by Iranian fire Sunday night and Monday morning.

A spokesman for the War Information Hqs. described the Iraqi claim as a pure lie. He said that the Baghdad regime, by raising this claim, was seeking a pretext to renew its vicious acts and aggression.

The WIH spokesman said although Iran's Islamic combatants are fighting Iraqi forces near Basra, but Basra had never been subjected to Iranian fire over Sunday night and Monday. [sentence as received]

Reportage on Combat Operations in War With Iraq

Communique No 2,753
LD201651 Tehran IRNA in English 1640 GMT 20 Feb 87

[Text:] Tehran, Feb. 20, IRNA — Iranian Air Force jet fighters shot down three Iraqi warplanes in the Persian Gulf region in a dogfight at 12:13 and 12:30 (08:43 and 09:00 GMT) Friday, according to a military communique here Friday.

Communique Number 2753 of the Joint Staff Command of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran said that 12 Iraqi troops were killed and many others wounded when a unit of Iranian Ground Forces in two series of operations penetrated Iraqi positions in Panjwin, northwestern fronts, at 23:30 (20:00 GMT) Wednesday and 03:30 Thursday (00:00 GMT). Iraqi defence positions and fortifications were destroyed and some heavy weapons of the enemy set afire in the course of the operations, it added.

The communique said that Iran's Navy freed a foreign trade ship and escorted her to international waters at 20:00 (16:30 GMT) Thursday after inspecting her cargo. The ship has been under inspection since Tuesday, it added.

Exchange of fire is still continuing between Muslim combatants of Iran and Iraqi forces since 04:00 (00:30 GMT) Friday in Sumar operational [word missing as received], said the communique.

In exchange of fire in southern fronts, being somewhat more intense in Faqqeh, Talaiyeh, and Kushk, the Muslim combatants inflicted substantial casualties and damage on the Iraqi forces, by shelling enemy positions, fortifications, and supply routes. Enemy movement in the region was also halted, it added.

The communique said that a group of Iraqi patrols attempting to approach one of the bases of the Iranian Muslim combatants in southern fronts was forced to flee sustaining heavy casualties.

Iran's Gendarmerie Forces killed and wounded some Iraqi soldiers preventing the activities of enemy forces in southern fronts, said the communique.

Iraqi Positions, Cities Shelled
LD201755 Tehran IRNA in English 1739 GMT 20 Feb 87

[Text:] Ahvaz, Khuzestan Prov., Feb. 20, IRNA — Muslim combatants of Iran shelled Iraqi positions on the western banks of the Arvand River over Thursday and Friday killing and wounding some Iraqi soldiers. A mortar launcher, from group bunkers as well as some vehicles of the enemy were destroyed in the shelling.

Basra-Abu al-Khasib-Al-Faw military route was shelled by the heavy fire of the Iranian Muslim forces during the same period in which enemy forces sustained damage.

Meanwhile, Muslim forces of Iran ceased shelling Iraqi cities of Al-Sulaymaniyah, Halabjah, Sayyid Sadiq, Khormal, Khan-aqin, Mandali, Zurbatiyah, Badrah and Do Sheykh in regions on the other side of Bakhtaran and Ilam Provinces since Thursday noon.

Eleven Iraqi soldiers were killed and wounded and two enemy vehicles destroyed in Iranian shelling on enemy positions and fortifications in the western fronts up till Thursday noon.

Communique No 2,754

LD211548 Tehran IRNA in English 1528 GMT 21 Feb 87

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 21, IRNA — Artillery fire of the Iranian Navy forced an Iraqi gunboat to flee to the Iraqi port of Umm-Qasr as she attempted to break the siege of Khur-'Abdallah waterway at 18:30 GMT Friday. Considerable damage was inflicted on the enemy boat as a result of the shelling, said a military communique here Saturday.

Joint Staff Communique no. 2754 said that Iranian combatants inflicted heavy losses and casualties on enemy troops in exchange of artillery fire in Sumar operational region early Friday. All Iraqi engineering activities were also suppressed in the region.

Most Iraqi reconnaissance flights in Mehran region and Kani-Sheykh were checked and brought under fire by the Iranian forces, the communique said.

Exchange of artillery fire continued in the northwestern and southern fronts where Iranian patrols inflicted some losses on the enemy. Iraqi reconnaissance flights were also checked in Chazabeh and Zayd, said the communique.

Iranian gendarmerie forces suppressed Iraqi engineering activities in parts of the southern and western fronts setting afire enemy positions and killing and wounding a number of Ba'thist soldiers, the communique said.

IRGC Captures 'Strategic' Pond

LD221111 Tehran IRNA in English 1050 GMT 22 Feb 87

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 22, IRNA — The ground forces of the Islamic Revolution's Guards Corps (IRGC) in a two-pronged successful operation launched in the axes south of Chazabeh and north of Hawr Hawizah, Saturday evening captured the strategically important "Azim" pond, said a statement issued by the IRGC Headquarters here Sunday.

In the operations in addition to taking over the 30 sq kms pond, the IRGC forces totally smashed an Iraqi company and seized or set ablaze a large amount of enemy munitions.

Iraq Bombs Communications Center

LD221623 Tehran IRNA in English 1619 GMT 22 Feb 87

[Text] Karaj [name as received], Tehran Prov., Feb. 22, IRNA — Iraqi warplanes bombed a telecommunications station around here Sunday afternoon. The attack inflicted some damage on the station.

Communique No 2,755

LD221717 Tehran IRNA in English 1702 GMT 22 Feb 87

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 22, IRNA — A skirmish between Iran's Muslim combatants and Iraqi troops in the Sumar region, western fronts, Saturday night resulted in substantial casualties and losses on the enemy, said a military communique here Sunday.

Communique number 2755 released by the Joint Staff Command of Iran's Armed Forces added that large parts of Iraqi positions were set ablaze in the northwestern fronts by Iranian artillery fire on Saturday.

Several Iraqi soldiers were killed or wounded and at least 15 enemy gun emplacements and observation posts destroyed in parts of the southern and western fronts Saturday when they were shelled by Iranian gendarmerie forces.

In the southern fronts, Iranian Muslim combatants destroyed several Iraqi gun emplacements, and halted enemy engineering operations. Effective blows were also dealt on enemy troops by convoys of Iranian patrols.

In the northwestern fronts Saturday, Iranian forces reconnoitered and shelled the newly-built Iraqi bases and outposts, killing or wounding a large number of enemy soldiers as well as inflicting considerable damage on them.

A convoy of Iranian patrols during a mission in the northwestern fronts on Saturday seized nine Iraqi Kalashnikov rifles.

Iranian forces shelled Iraqi motorized columns in Nahr 'Anbar and Yebis, southern fronts, on Saturday, inflicting heavy casualties and losses on enemy forces. Reconnaissance flights of Iraqi helicopters were checked in Yeydi, southern fronts, Saturday.

In the western fronts, Iraqi trucks, carrying supply and personnel in the Sumar region, came under Iranian artillery fire on Saturday and Sunday. In the Qasr-e Shirin theatre, enemy engineering operations were checked by the Iranian forces, the communique concluded.

Iraqi Mirage Downed 22 Feb

LD222024 Tehran IRNA in English 2022 GMT 22 Feb 87

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 22, IRNA — An Iraqi F-1 Mirage fighter was shot down by the anti-aircraft fire of Iran's Islamic combatants in Kordestan Province Sunday afternoon. The pilot of the enemy plane, First Lieutenant Yahya Qasim Ahmad, was also captured in the Bijar town in Kordestan Province. He is reportedly injured and under medical care.

The intruding Iraqi fighter was shot down when returning from an air raid on a telecommunication station and a food processing factory in Karaj near Tehran.

Forces Take Jasim River Area

LD230725 Tehran IRNA in English 0723 GMT 23 Feb 87

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 23, IRNA — The Muslim forces of Iran in a fresh and surprising thrust into enemy positions west of Jasim River, Sunday night liberated more Iraqi territories killing or wounding a large number of Iraqi troops.

In these attacks launched in continuation of Karbala'-5 operations started Jan. 9, the Muslim combatants of Iran captured a number of Iraqi forces in the region. Heavy damage was inflicted on enemy armaments.

Iraqi Brigades 'Totally Smashed'

LD230731 Tehran IRNA in English 0728 GMT 23 Feb 87

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 23, IRNA — Brigades 116, 39, 435 of Infantry Division 2 of the Iraqi Army were totally smashed in the attacks of the Muslim forces of Iran launched Sunday night in Shalamchah-Basra road, west of Jasim River and made fresh advances.

In Sunday night operations launched in retaliation for Iraqi bombardments and also with the objective of completing defense positions of the Muslim forces of Iran, heavy losses and damage were inflicted on enemy, said a Khatem ol-Anbiya' Headquarters statement Monday.

In their latest attack, launched in continuation of the Karbala'-5 operations, code named 'Ya Zahra (A.S.)', the Iranian troops also destroyed or seized a number of Iraqi vehicles and engineering equipment.

The Iranian radio disrupted its normal programs Monday morning broadcasting the latest victories of the Muslim forces of Iran.

'More Than 1,000' Iraqi Casualties

LD230742 Tehran IRNA in English 0740 GMT 23 Feb 87

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 23, IRNA — More than 1,000 Iraqi forces were killed or wounded in the fresh attack of the Muslim forces of Iran launched in Shalamchah-Basra road, west of Jasim River, Sunday night.

The Iranian forces supported by artillery and armoured units, in their lightning attack on enemy positions destroyed many Iraqi tanks.

The casualties inflicted on Iraqi forces Sunday night, raises the number of enemy losses to 51,000 since the start of the Karbala'-5 operations Jan. 9. Out of those captured Sunday night some 40 so far been transferred behind war fronts.

Pilots of the Iranian Army aviation service bombed Iraqi positions west of Jasim River Monday morning, inflicting heavy losses.

Iraqi Counterattack 'Smashed'

LD230943 Tehran IRNA in English 0934 GMT 23 Feb 87

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 23, IRNA — Iran's Muslim forces smashed an Iraqi counterattack on Shalamchah-Basra road Monday morning killing or wounding hundreds of enemy soldiers and forcing the others to flee. A large number of Iraqi tanks, armoured personnel carriers and vehicles were also destroyed in the crushed counterattack.

The Muslim combatants of Iran in continuation of their last night's thrust into Iraqi positions on Shalamchah-Basra road continued fortifying their positions, suppressing all enemy activities.

Iraqi Chemical Weapons Specialist Captured

LD230923 Tehran IRNA in English 0836 GMT 23 Feb 87

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 23, IRNA — Iraqi chemical weapons specialist along with three company commanders were captured by Muslim combatants in an ambush attack Sunday night in Shalamchah.

The chemical specialist officer said in a brief interview that he personally supervised the deployment of chemical weapons during the imposed-war and had been sent to the region for this purpose.

Iraqi Plane 'Forced To Flee'

LD230926 Tehran IRNA in English 0922 GMT 23 Feb 87

[Text] Orumiyeh, Feb. 23, IRNA — An Iraqi war plane violated the air space of Sardasht, West Azarbayjan Province, at 17:30 local time Sunday. The intruding warplane was forced to flee before doing any damage.

2,500 Iraqis Killed

LD230939 Tehran IRNA in English 0925 GMT 23 Feb 87

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 23, IRNA — Some 2,500 Iraqi soldiers were killed or wounded in the latest Iranian thrust into enemy positions west of the Jasim River in the Karbala'-5 operational theater since Sunday night. The number of Iraqi prisoners of war (POWS) evacuated to safe places behind the fronts reached 70. Muslim combatants of Iran are now advancing on Shalamchah-Basra axis.